

P a t e n t c l a i m s

1.

A system for the sale of consumer goods, wherein the system is designed to provide a customer with a non-validated token that represents an article of merchandise, wherein the said article is to be paid for by the customer at a checkout unit when the token is checked by said unit, the said checkout unit having a device for communicating with an article dispensing device and providing the article dispensing device with a first transaction code after the article has been paid for, and a device for providing the customer with a validated token which bears a second transaction code, wherein the said validated token is to be used to obtain the purchased article from the article dispensing device with the aid of a comparator device within the article dispensing device which compares the transaction code on the validated token as entered in the comparator device with the transaction code which has been communicated by said communication device, and delivery of the article when there is a defined code correspondence, characterised in

that the validated token bears a transaction code selected from the group consisting of:

- a serially generated transaction code,
- a randomly generated transaction code,
- a pre-determined series of transaction codes, and
- a unique token number generated serially or randomly by a device which provides the non-validated token; and

that the validated token is

either

- a) the non-validated token provided with the transaction code through processing in the checkout unit,

or

- b) a substitute token issued by the checkout unit from a token dispenser, from a token printer, or from a supply of pre-made, non-alterable, reusable, revalidatable and machine-readable tokens.

2.

A system as disclosed in claim 1, characterised in that said device for providing the non-validated token is a printer which is controlled by a selection panel that displays articles for which a non-validated token can be printed on activation thereof.

3.

A system as disclosed in claim 1 or 2, characterised in that the non-validated token bears information that is related to the article type.

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4.

A system as disclosed in claim 3, characterised in that the article type information is selected from the group consisting of: a numerical code, a bar code, an EAN code, a UPC code, a magnetically readable code, an rf label readable code, a manually interpretable article identification code.

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5.

A system as disclosed in claim 4, characterised in that the article type information is additionally selected from the group consisting of: animation of the article, article name, article price, a unique token number.

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6.

A system as disclosed in claim 1, characterised in that the transaction code provided on the validated token is selected from the group consisting of:
a numerical code, a bar code, an EAN code, a UPC code, a magnetically readable code, an rf label readable code, a series of numbers, a series of letters, a series of a combination of numbers and letters, at least one row of punched holes, a programmable IC chip, a pre-programmed IC chip.

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7.

A system as disclosed in any one of claims 1-6, characterised in that communication between the checkout unit and the article dispensing device is selected from the group consisting of:
- ultrasound transmission,
- electro-optical transmission,
- rf transmission,
- bluetooth transmission
- wired transmission,
- transmission via a retailer's or trader's central computer unit and general merchandise transaction

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control unit.

8.

A system as disclosed in any one of claims 1-7,
5 characterised in that the checkout unit comprises or is connected to a transaction code
encoder device, the checkout unit also comprising an article type information scanner
device, wherein the said scanner device is for communicating said information to the
encoder device, the said checkout unit communicating with the article dispensing device
10 via said token encoder device, wherein the said token encoder device transmits said
information to a cash register in said checkout unit for processing during a payment
receipt operation, and wherein the said encoder device also has a control unit for
controlling a printer for the issue of the validated article token, and a device for
transmitting said communication to the article dispensing device.

15 9.

A system as disclosed in any one of claims 1-8,
characterised in
that the transaction code on the validated token is entered in the comparator device
through machine reading of the transaction code, said machine being selected from the
20 group consisting of:
- OCR reader,
- optical scanner for scanning a bar code or an EAN code,
- an electromagnetic magnetic strip reader,
- an IC chip reader,
25 - a punched hole reader,
- an rf label code reader.

10.

A system as disclosed in any one of claims 1-9,
30 characterised in that the article dispensing device has a manually operated keypad,
keyboard or touch screen for input of a manually readable transaction code on the
validated token into the comparator unit.

11.

35 A system as disclosed in any one of claims 1-10,
characterised in that the first transaction code which is communicated to the article
dispensing device and the second transaction code provided on the validated token are

the same codes or codes that are related to each other, e.g., complementary codes, symmetrical codes or unsymmetrical codes.

12.

- 5 A system as disclosed in claim 2, characterised in that the selection panel is a touch screen.

13.

- A system as disclosed in claim 1, characterised in
10 that the validated token is a part of or consists of packaging for the article that is to be dispensed.

14.

- A system as disclosed in claim 13, characterised in
15 that transaction code on the validated token is on the processing thereof in the checkout unit applicable to the packaging, transmittable to the packaging, or is provided by uncovering an area on the packaging that bears the transaction code.